Department of State TELEGRAM

EXCISE

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1864

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/7/85 (THAYER, YVONNE) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM PINS PINT AR
SUBJECT: (U) CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS IN ARGENTINA: UPDATE AND PERSPECTIVES

REF: BUENOS AIRES 436

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT).

2. SUMMARY: CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS HAVE FOR A LONG TIME BEEN AN UNFORTUNATE ASPECT OF ARGENTINE LIFE, VARIOUSLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO COMMON CRIMINALS, TERRORISTS AND CORRUPT SECURITY OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY'S TROUBLED HISTORY. INFORMATION ON SUCH CASES IS LIMITED, EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL CASE EXPLOITED BY THE SENSATIONALIST PRESS. CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES BY SECURITY FORCES, INCLUDING KIDNAPPINGS FOR RANSOM, ARE COMMON KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITIES CLAIM SOME SUCCESS IN CURBING AND CONVICTING THOSE REPSONSIBLE. SUCH ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHT ARGENTINA'S NEED TO INTENSIFY MOVEMENT TOWARDS ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE LEGAL CONTROLS AND A
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RESPONSIBLE, JUST SECURITY SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [redacted] DATE 4/6/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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3. CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS FOR RANSOM OR OTHER CRIMINAL (NON-POLITICAL) MOTIVE CONTINUE TO BE A DISTURBING AND COMPLICATING FACTOR IN ARGENTINE SOCIETY. THE PHENOMENON DATES BACK TO THE TURBULENT BEGINNINGS OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC AND THERE HAVE BEEN RESURGENCES FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY'S TROUBLED HISTORY. KIDNAPPING FOR MONETARY AND POLITICAL MOTIVE WAS FREQUENT DURING THE ELECTED ILLIA GOVERNMENT IN THE LATE 1950S; SUBVERSIVE KIDNAPPINGS FOR RANSOM IN THE EARLY 1970S LAVISHLY FINANCED THE TERRORIST SCOURGE; AND CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS CONTINUE TO CLOUD THE HORIZON TODAY.

2. IT IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ACCURATE INFORMATION ON CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS, WHICH WE ARE HERE DISTINGUISHING FROM THE PRACTICE OF ABDUCTIONS BY SECURITY FORCES OF SUBVERSIVE SUSPECTS. FAMILIES HOLD CRIMINAL CASES CLOSELY IN ORDER NOT TO JEOPARDIZE THE VICTIM'S SAFETY, ALTHOUGH ONCE "OUT OF THE BAG" THE POPULAR PRESS CAN FEED FOR DAYS ON A GOOD ABDUCTION STORY. CRIMINAL ABDUCTION CASES ARE GENERALLY NOT RECORDED THROUGH HABEAS CORPUS PETITIONS AND DENUNCIATIONS TO HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PRESS. ONE CASE CLAIMED CONSIDERABLE EMBASSY ATTENTION: THE CRIMINAL KIDNAPPING-MURDER OF THE US-BORN KRAISELBURD INFANT IN 1976. OTHER CASES INVOLVE OUR ACQUAINTANCES OR THEIR CONTACTS. RECENTLY WE HAVE HEARD OF SEVERAL KIDNAPPINGS FOR RANSOM IN 1978, INCLUDING THE SON OF A PROMINENT LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AND THE DAUGHTER OF THE NEPHEW OF A WELL-KNOWN ARGENTINE BANKER WHO WAS RANSOMED FOR A LARGE, UNDISCLOSED AMOUNT. BANKING CIRCLES OCCASIONALLY RIPPLE WITH KIDNAPPING RUMORS WHEN LARGE AMOUNTS OF SUSPECTED RANSOM MONEY CHANGES HANDS, AND LOCAL GOSSIP HAS IT THAT CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS ARE ON THE

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RISE. OUTSIDE OUR OWN CIRCLES OF ACQUAINTANCES AND CONTACTS, WE SIMPLY HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA OF ABDUCTION FREQUENCY -- ONLY THE SUSPICION THAT ABDUCTIONS POSE A MAJOR/SOCIAL/CRIMINAL PROBLEM.

3. NO ONE SPEAKS OPENLY OF CRIMINAL KIDNAPPINGS AND LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT SUBSEQUENT, IF ANY, FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIONS AND CONVICTIONS. AN INTELLIGENCE SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF OF A RECENT KIDNAPPING OF AN INDUSTRIALIST WHO WAS UNHARMED AFTER AN INVESTIGATION AND POLICE SWOOP ON THE KIDNAPPERS'

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HIDEOUT. SEVERAL POLICE WERE IMPLICATED IN THE CRIME AND ONE IS CURRENTLY BEING HELD PROVISIONALLY UNDER PEN UNTIL A LEGAL CASE IS DOCUMENTED.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9771
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
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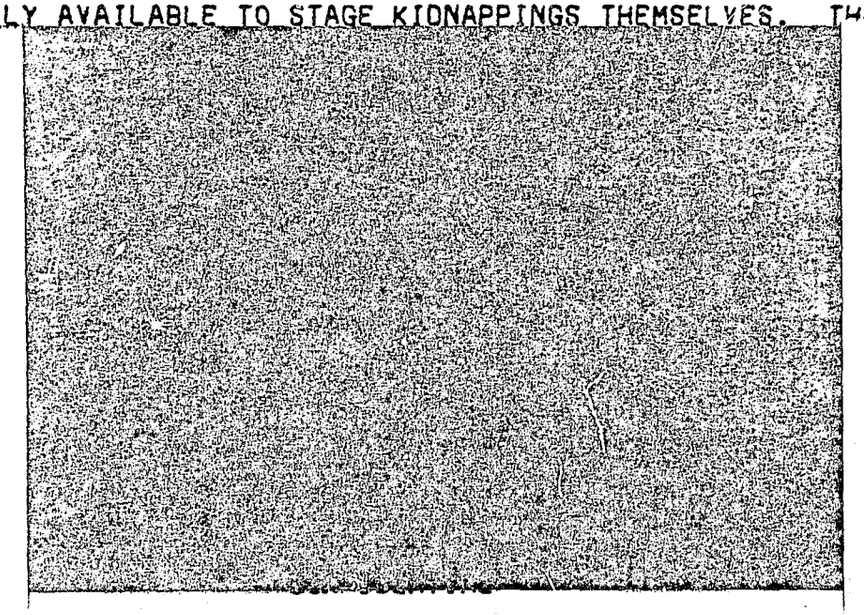
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1864

4. GIVEN THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN ARGENTINA'S HISTORY, ASSESSING THE BLAME IS DIFFICULT. SOME CONTENT THAT AS THE TIGHT ANTI-SUBVERSIVE CAMPAIGN WINDS DOWN, COMMON CRIMINALS HAVE MORE ROOM IN WHICH *TO OPERATE. OTHERS HINT OMINOUSLY THAT AS THE SECURITY* THREAT RECEDES, HIRED BODYGUARDS OF DUBIOUS BACKGROUNDS ARE THEMSELVES RESORTING TO CRIME, EITHER TO DEMONSTRATE THE CONTINUED THREAT TO THEIR EMPLOYERS OR BECAUSE THEY ARE INCREASINGLY OUT OF JOBS AND HAVE THE PERSONAL INFORMATION READILY AVAILABLE TO STAGE KIDNAPPINGS THEMSELVES. THE



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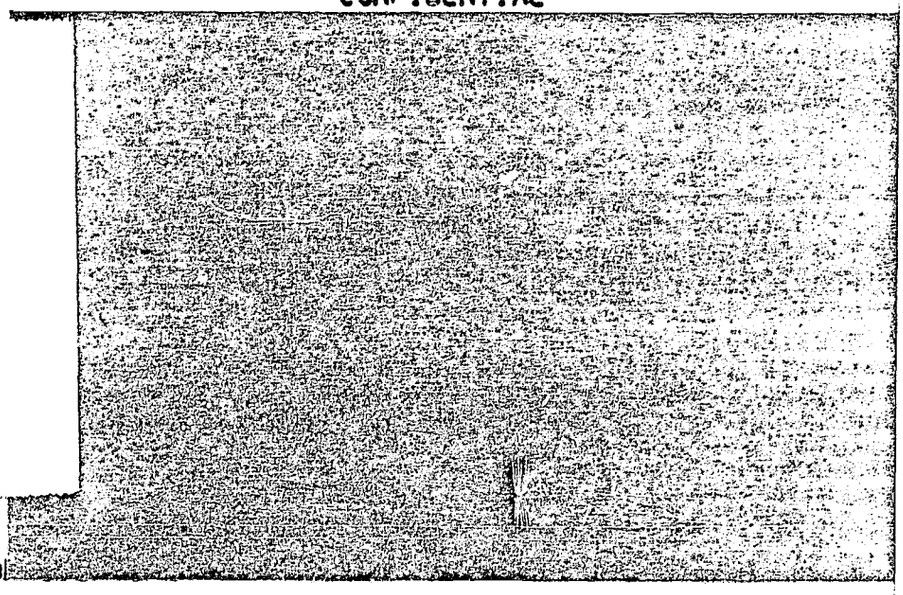

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